NOVA SCOTIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

2015 - 2016 STATEMENT OF MANDATE

APRIL 2015

Table of Contents

1. Message from the Minister and CEO 3
2. Mandate 4
3. Government Priorities 7
4. Performance Measures 9
5. Budget Context 13

1. Message from the Minister and the CEO

We are pleased to present the 2015-2016 Statement of Mandate for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (NSHRC). This plan sets out the NSHRC's strategic direction for the fiscal year.

The NSHRC's vision is to help build inclusive communities and to protect and promote human rights in Nova Scotia. An effective relationship with both government and the public will enable the NSHRC to fulfil its dual mandate: human rights dispute resolution, and eliminating barriers to full participation in society through education, training and consultation, including policy advice.

In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the NSHRC will engage and support communities through conversations and research; strengthen our capability to respond to critical community situations through dialogue and partnership with the community and human rights stakeholders, raising awareness and the practice of restorative approaches and procedures.

NSHRC staff will continue to build upon current partnerships with external stakeholders and communities by increasing awareness and knowledge about restorative approaches and practices.

Recognizing the immense value in proactively engaging the business community, the NSHRC is building upon partnerships with sector associations, chambers of commerce and other stakeholders to advance work in consumer equity by supporting businesses to become educated and prevent issues of consumer racial profiling, an issue explored in our Working Better Together Report (2013).

The NSHRC continues to support government's commitment to fiscal responsibility and sustainability through internal restructuring and cost reductions to ensure the most efficient use of resources to best achieve our mandate.

The NSHRC is a dynamic organization which is proud of its leadership role in the protection and promotion of human rights. We are committed to working with all Nova Scotians to assist them to participate in and contribute to a vibrant, prosperous and diverse community.

Honourable Lena Metlege Diab
Minister Responsible for the
Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*

Tracey L. Williams
Director and CEO
Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

2. Mandate

The NSHRC has a unique role within Nova Scotia. It is an independent government agency charged with administering the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*, a provincial statute created in 1969, with the most recent amendments in December, 2012. The NSHRC is mandated by the Act to help build inclusive communities and protect human rights in Nova Scotia.

The specific duties of the NSHRC are set out in the Act. The NSHRC has the responsibility of administering and enforcing the provisions of the Act. In addition it develops programs of public information and education in the field of human rights to forward the principle that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights without regard to race, religion, creed, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation Furthermore, it is mandated to conduct research and encourage research by universities and other bodies in the general field of human rights.

Additionally the NSHRC co-operates with and assists any person, organization or body concerned with human rights, inside or outside the province.

The NSHRC also works with government by advising and assisting government departments and coordinating their activities as far as these activities concern human rights and advising the government on suggestions, recommendations and requests made by private organizations and individuals. It reports as required by the Minister on the business and activities of the Commission .and considers, investigates or administers any matter or activity referred to the Commission by the Governor in Council or the Minister.

Vision

The NSHRC is committed to actively engage and work with all Nova Scotians and our diverse communities to effectively:

- advance equity and dignity,
- foster positive and respectful relations, and
- protect human rights.

The NSHRC believes in and is committed to:

- restorative approaches
- respectful and productive relationships

- inclusivity
- service excellence
- continuous learning through research and innovation
- transparency

Strategic Goals

In 2012, the NSHRC defined its strategic goals for the ensuing three year period. As we are entering into a strategic planning year, we intend to extend these goals for one more year to allow one additional year to work towards achieving these goals, and to enable the full engagement of staff, Commissioners and other key stakeholders in the development of our future goals. The goals for 2015-2016 remain as follows:

1. **Identify, Address and Operationalize Priority Human Rights Issues**

   The NSHRC will:

   a. outline a process and criteria for identifying priorities, identify the most important/strategic human rights issues in order to guide the Commission in its work and gain agreement to proceed from the Commissioners;

   b. establish new, and build upon current partnerships with external stakeholders and communities by increasing awareness and knowledge about restorative approaches and practices;

   c. engage and support communities through conversations and research; strengthen our capability to respond to critical community situations through dialogue and partnership with the community and human rights stakeholders, raising awareness and the practice of restorative approaches and procedures.

2. **Fully Integrate Restorative Approaches Into the Commission's Work**

   The NSHRC will:

   a. Build upon current partnerships with external stakeholders and communities by increasing awareness and

knowledge about restorative approaches and practices;

b. Create and support an advisory committee of the business community stakeholders with a goal of raising awareness of the potential lost sales/profit due to consumer racial profiling (consumer equity).

3. Advance Dialogue and Human Rights Practices

The NSHRC will:

a. profile and build upon advancements in human rights work through such strategies as contributing to the national conversation surrounding human rights issues and, in particular, will assess and report on our experience with the new dispute resolution process and furthermore will prepare to capitalize on the 50 year anniversary of the Commission (2017);

b. strengthen government and media relations;

c. encourage the adoption of best human rights practices by adopting the following strategies:
   i. strengthen connections with all stakeholders such as professionals, volunteers, communities, businesses and organizations involved in human rights work in order to foster a stronger vision, exchange effective approaches and develop new ideas;
   ii. provide tools, resources, and potentially on-line training, including restorative training for Boards of Inquiry;
   iii. contribute to a stronger national partnership of Commissions, particularly those Commissions that are sized similarly to that of Nova Scotia;

d. enhance mechanisms to give voice to people with protected characteristics;

e. update and implement annual communications plans/strategy.

3. Government Priorities (as appropriate for an independent agency)

The September 2014 Speech from the Throne identified the following government priorities: Fiscal Sustainability, The Economy, Demographics & Population, and Education & Skills Training.

Although it is an independent agency, the existence of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and its mandated work is rooted in legislation. Where possible and appropriate the NSHRC seeks to align its priorities with those of government.

1. Fiscal Sustainability

The NSHRC continues to support government's commitment to fiscal responsibility and sustainability through internal restructuring and cost reductions to ensure the most efficient use of resources to best achieve our mandate.

2. The Economy

Through strategic partnerships with business sector associations and local chambers of commerce, the NSHRC will help association membership in the retail and service sectors to reduce instances of Consumer Racial Profiling to create greater Consumer Equity.

3. Demographics & Population

Through a coordinated stakeholder engagement project designed to foster ongoing two-way conversations between the NSHRC and the communities most impacted by instances of discrimination, the NSHRC will support the work of communities to better understand the priority human rights issues present in their communities and work collaboratively to foster better relationships between disparate communities and encourage collective action and use of shared resources to address shared issues.

4. Education and Skills Training

The NSHRC will continue to support the work of the Ability Starts Here Symposium on Inclusive Education and Employment to encourage employers, and provide supports towards the increased inclusion of people with disabilities in both education and employment.

The *Now or Never Report* identified, as one of the 12 strategic actions or "Game Changers", the requirement for Nova Scotia to become a more inclusive and welcoming province:

> *"Community leaders must also play a more assertive role in making Nova Scotia a welcoming place for interprovincial migrants and new Canadians and reducing the attitudinal barriers facing First Nations, African Nova Scotians and other disadvantaged groups."*

The NSHRC is committed to continuing its work with our disadvantaged citizens such as those belonging to the First Nations, African Nova Scotian, immigrant and disabled communities in order to protect their right to inherent dignity and equal treatment as members of the human family. This work not only includes engagement with these communities but also extends to all Nova Scotians through outreach and education to promote inclusive and barrier free work places and living spaces.

The NSHRC has embarked on a multi-year engagement strategy concentrating on renewing our relationships within the African Nova Scotian communities. It is anticipated that as this work progresses, it will carry over to protected and other groups who would also benefit from heightened awareness within the population at large. The NSHRC introduced a new position in the 2014/15 fiscal year designated as a Mi'Kmaq/Aboriginal Officer. Additionally the Commission will continue to work collaboratively with government and other stakeholders such as Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) the Disabled Persons Commission, Collaborative Partnership Network and Partners for Human Rights.

Human rights education leads to more inclusive communities, strengthens learning and acceptance, and creates a better workplace culture which, in turn, increases prosperity for all.

> *"Although some action steps are suggested, these are not presented as detailed recommendations for policy implementation. Rather, they are meant to identify different ways of thinking that will be required if the ambitious goas are to be achieved. They speak to the need for significant changes in attitudes and* ***outlooks across the***

province, and for innovative policy and programmatic approaches to be adopted by government, business, labour, and industry organizations, and lead institutions and agencies. They are not just directed at government, but need to be seriously considered by all other sectors and the general public."

The Now or Never Report also identifies the pressing need for "A New Politics" in Nova Scotia to achieve the objectives identified by the extensive province-wide consultations and vision of the oneNS Commission. The NSHRC has demonstrated the effectiveness of restorative approaches in the work we do. These principles have enabled the NSHRC to reform its dispute resolution work. The success of this program has drawn interest from the NS Public Service Commission, other local and international government agencies and community groups. The NSHRC will work with municipalities to increase their awareness and understanding of the use of restorative principles as an alternative to the status quo – arbitration, litigation and competition – in turn focusing on collaboration, establishing trust and healthy working relationships to advance the goals of their municipality and our province.

4. Performance Measures

1. **Identify, Address and Operationalize Priority Human Rights Issues**					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA Base Year 2011-2012**	**TARGET March 2016**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
The organization's activities are aligned with its strategic prioritization of human rights issues	NSHRC's operational plan is being implemented	Statement of Mandate prepared March 30, 2012 and bi-monthly reports created for Commiss-ioners	Statement of Mandate prepared March 30, 2015 and bi-monthly reports created for Commiss-ioners	Racial profiling Sexual harassment Environment al racism	Continue to prepare Statements of Mandate and bi-monthly progress report to Commissioners that identifies current priority human rights issues and implementation time lines.
	Logic models exist for planning, implementation and evaluation of key human rights initiatives.	N/A	Logic models created and tabled for Commiss-ioners		Hold planning sessions and seek expert assistance where required

	Status update with respect to each priority identified	N/A	Every 2 months		Continue to assign managers and staff to each priority as action items following each Commissioners meeting Continue to identify appropriate partners and stakeholders for each priority
2. Fully Integrate Restorative Approaches into the Commission's Work					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA Base Year 2011-2012**	**TARGET March 2016**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
The Commission's stakeholders understand the restorative approaches inherent in its work	Communicatio n Plan prepared identifying and building on prior communication initiatives	Communi-cation Plan prepared March 30, 2010	Updated Communica tion Plan prepared by June 1, 2015	N/A	Identify each of the Commission's strategic priorities Develop procedures to ensure that major dispute resolution initiatives carry with them a communications component that highlight the restorative/collaborative processes both internally, at Boards of Inquiry and Restorative Boards of Inquiry.

	Status update with respect to each communication initiative	N/A	June 1, 2015	N/A	Communications Advisor to work with Senior Management team to engage staff in each communication initiative
The organization's activities fully incorporate restorative approaches where appropriate	All three business units demonstrate application of restorative processes	N/A	September 2015	N/A	Commission management and staff complete restorative organization project. Legal unit completes restorative training of Commissioners and board chairs. Legal unit completes independent review of the Restorative Board of Inquiry procedures and processes to ensure ongoing success.

3. Advance Dialogue and Human Rights Practices					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA Base Year 2011-2012**	**TARGET March 2016**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
NSHRC is at the cutting edge of best human rights practices	Innovate new human rights protection and promotion practices.	N/A	Partner in Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grant Proposal		• • Share/receive information regarding best practices with BOI chairs • Seek amendments to the NS *Human Rights Act* to support restorative processes • Capture innovative Commission work via polling, academic papers and conferences • Collaborate with academics and international, national and local organizations and governments to research restorative approaches in human rights and governance
NSHRC is a national role model in human rights practices	Outcomes of evaluation activities are shared with other agencies.	N/A	Report to CASHRA on NSHRC's initiatives June, 2015	N/A	• Attend CASHRA conference June 22-24, 2015 in Saskatoon, SK • Work with other human rights agencies, governmental agencies, NGO's and academics to enhance human rights dialogue • Implement evaluation of restorative dispute resolution activities.

5. Budget Context and Budget

Budget Context

Budget

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission			
	2014-15 Estimate ($ thousands)	2014-15 Forecast ($ thousands)	2015-16 Estimate ($ thousands)
Gross Departmental Expenses:	2,509.0	2,482.2	2532.0
FTE's	24.5	22.6	24.5